

Locks and Dam No.15, Lock Operator's Shelter House HAER No. IL-27-A
Upper Mississippi River (Arsenal Island)
City of Rock Island
Rock Island County
Illinois

HAER
ILL
81-ROC14,
5A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Navigation Project, 482.9 miles upstream from the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Complex extends from Arsenal Island, Rock Island, Rock Island County, Illinois, to Davenport, Scott County, Iowa. Lock Operator's Shelter House sits at the mid-point of the lock chambers on the reinforced concrete intermediate wall between the two locks. The locks are towards the Arsenal Island shore.

Date of Construction: 1931-1934

Architect/Engineers: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District: design-Herbert G. McCormick, construction supervision-John H. Peil

General Contractor: Peter Plambeck, Davenport, Iowa

Description of Building:

Exterior--overall dimensions: 16 feet 8 inches by 12 feet 9.5 inches. Reinforced concrete walls and structural system. Openings: 1 doorway and door, 14 9-pane windows (1 of which is in upper panel of entry door). Hipped roof with tile shingles.

Interior--1 floor, 1 room

Statement of Significance: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1927-1940 Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Channel Project changed the free-flowing river into an intra-continental canal, regulated and controlled for the promotion of commerce. The 29 lock and dam complexes that comprise this slack-water navigation system constitute seminal developments in the technological history of American river navigation. Locks and Dam No. 15 was the first complex, and served, despite its unique features, as a prototype for the whole system. This Lock Operator's Shelter House is one of those unique features. It was only necessary because the auxiliary lock was complete and useable. Most complexes included only the upstream gate and footings for an auxiliary lock, and thus could be operated from the landward side of the main lock.

Project Statement: In 1985 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1927-1940 Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Channel Project was found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In 1992, while finalizing plans for the major rehabilitation of Locks and Dam 15, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, determined that demolition of the Lock Operator's Shelter House would significantly reduce operation and maintenance costs, rid the area of a safety hazard, and provide a much needed increase in the construction and work areas. The district also determined the building was obsolete and had no further use. In accordance with stipulation 3(B) of a 1987 Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement, the Corps agreed that HAER documentation be conducted for the Lock Operator's Shelter House.

Historian:

Mary Yeater Rathbun
Rathbun Associates, Hollandale WI, February 1993